

The Young Slave

The Young Slave is an Italian literary fairy tale written by Giambattista Basile in his 1634 work, the *Pentamerone*.^[1]

It is Aarne-Thompson type 410, Sleeping Beauty; other variants include *The Glass Coffin* and *Sun, Moon, and Talia*.^[2]

Synopsis

Girls competed to jump over a rose bush; at last Cilia, the baron's sister, did so, but she knocked off a rose petal. To pretend she had cleared it entirely, she swallowed the petal and became pregnant. She bore a daughter, named her Lisa, and gave her to fairies to raise. The fairies gave her gifts, but one twisted her ankle and cursed Lisa to die when she was seven, because her mother, combing her hair, forgot the comb in her hair. This happened, and the lamenting mother put her in seven crystal coffins and put them in a room. Her health failed. Before she died, she gave her brother the key to the room and made him promise not to open it.

He obeyed, but he married, and one day while he hunted, his wife opened the door. Jealous of the girl's beauty, she pulled her out by her hair, which knocked out the comb and brought her back to life. The woman beat her and made her a slave, telling her husband that her aunt had sent her a slave and warned her that stern measures were necessary with this perverse slave.

The baron went to the fair and asked everyone for what they wanted. Lisa asked for a doll, a knife, and some pumice-stone, and cursed him not be able to cross a river to return if he did not. He forgot them, but the river swelled, reminding him. Lisa took them to the kitchen and told her story to the doll, and then threatened to sharpen the knife on the stone and kill herself if the doll did not answer. The doll did.

After several days of this, the baron heard this and eavesdropped. When the girl began to whet the knife, he broke into the kitchen and took it from her. Then he put Lisa in the care of a relative, where she regained her health and beauty. The baron brought her to his own home, dismissed his wife back to her relatives, and in due course married off his niece.

References

- Giovanni Batiste Basile *Il Pentamerone, or The Tale of Tales*, "The Young Slave" (<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/sleepingbeauty/stories/youngslave.html>), Sir Richard Burton, translator. London: Henry and Company, 1893.
- Heidi Anne Heiner, "Tales Similar to Sleeping Beauty" (<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/sleepingbeauty/other.html>)

See also

- Snow White
- The Sleeping Prince
- The Maiden with the Rose on her Forehead
- The Bay-Tree Maiden

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